



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance
600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111
www.mass.gov/dma

Eligibility Operations Memo 03-12
October 1, 2003

TO: MassHealth Eligibility Operations Staff

FROM: Russ Kulp, Assistant Commissioner, Member Services

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Russ Kulp.

RE: **MassHealth Essential: MassHealth Benefits to the Long-Term Unemployed**

Introduction

The Massachusetts Legislature has passed, and the governor has signed into law, legislation allowing the Division to offer medical benefits to certain unemployed adults under the age of 65. The effective date of this change is October 1, 2003.

These benefits will be available to persons:

- whose family group gross income is less than or equal to 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL);
- who are not eligible for MassHealth Basic;
- who are currently unemployed and have been unemployed for more than one year;
- who are not eligible for unemployment compensation; and
- who meet certain other eligibility criteria.

In addition, these unemployed persons must be U.S. citizens, qualified aliens, or protected aliens to receive benefits.

New Coverage Type

Persons meeting the eligibility criteria described above will be offered MassHealth coverage under a new coverage type – MassHealth Essential. MassHealth Essential has two components: Purchase of Medical Benefits and Premium Assistance.

- **MassHealth Essential Purchase of Medical Benefits** – for persons who have no health insurance.
 - (a) Uninsured persons receiving Essential Purchase of Medical Benefits must enroll with a primary care clinician (PCC) before receipt of benefits.

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**New Coverage
Type (cont.)**

- (b) Essential Purchase of Medical Benefits members are not to pay premiums for their coverage; however, they are required to pay copayments for prescription drugs and nonemergency services provided in a hospital emergency room.
- **MassHealth Essential Premium Assistance** – for persons who have health insurance. For insured persons receiving Essential Premium Assistance, MassHealth will pay all or part of their health insurance premium provided the health insurance meets the Division’s cost-effective analysis.
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Enrollment Cap

Because the authorizing legislation does not allow the Division to exceed allotted expenditures, the Division will freeze enrollment as soon as 36,000 people are enrolled. The MassHealth Essential program is currently funded through September 30, 2004. Members will be notified of any changes in the availability of Essential benefits.

Potential members who are denied MassHealth solely because the cap has been reached will be placed on a waiting list. If and when enrollment numbers fall below set limits, these persons will be processed from the waiting list in the order of placement. MA21 will access the waiting list to perform new determinations on the number of persons that can be added without exceeding enrollment limits. This process will be managed and performed at Central Office. The eligibility start date for persons processed from the waiting list will be the date that the new determination occurs. Persons will receive new notices as determinations are made from the waiting list.

Eligibility staff will be notified if and when it becomes necessary to impose a freeze on Essential enrollment.

**Differences
Between Coverage
Types**

Although the eligibility rules for MassHealth Essential and MassHealth Basic are similar, there are some distinct differences between the two coverage types.

MassHealth Basic	MassHealth Essential
Allows unlimited enrollment to all persons meeting eligibility rules.	Restricts the number of enrollees to 36,000, and offers eligibility for a time-limited period. (Benefits are currently approved by the Legislature through September 30, 2004. Benefits will not be available after this date if the Legislature does not authorize an extension.)
Members are subject to managed care requirements and must enroll either in a managed care organization (MCO) or with a PCC.	Members are subject to managed care requirements but may only enroll with a PCC. They cannot enroll in an MCO.
Covered services* include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audiologist services• Chapter 766 home assessments and participation in team meetings• Chiropractor services• Hearing aid services• Nurse-midwife services• Orthotic services• Vision care services• Home health services	Covered services are more restrictive – the services* listed under Basic are not available.

**Identifying
Potentially Eligible
Persons**

To ensure that Essential coverage is offered first to members who lost Basic coverage in April 2003, the Division has identified approximately 34,000 adults who lost or were denied Basic benefits and who would be potentially eligible under the new MassHealth Essential rules. The Division sent an advance mailing to these adults between September 1, 2003, and September 4, 2003.

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**Identifying
Potentially Eligible
Persons (cont.)**

The advance mailing packet (in English and Spanish) includes a notice (see attached notice) that explains the availability of medical benefits, and:

- an ERV-7 (Rev. 04/03) – this is a specially-colored orange review form identical to the Rev. 04/03 ERV-5 – MassHealth Eligibility Review Form;
- an ERV-Info sheet (Rev. 04/03) – ERV instructions;
- an ERD – MassHealth Eligibility Representative Designation Form (04/03); and
- a UNIV-5 (Rev. 05/00) – multilingual notice.

Adults receiving this mailing will be instructed to complete the ERV-7 and send it, along with verification of income, to their previous MEC as soon as possible because of the enrollment cap.

MA21 Changes

MA21 will be updated to automate eligibility for MassHealth Essential, effective October 1, 2003. No modifications will be required to data entry screens.

- Once data entry is complete, MA21 will send the appropriate notice – either a Request for More Information (VC-1), an approval notice, or a denial.
 - Once the enrollment cap is reached, MA21 will notify applicants to whom the Division is unable to provide benefits even though they meet Essential eligibility criteria. These applicants will be placed on a waiting list.
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MMIS Changes

Two new aid categories will appear on MMIS for persons eligible for these new coverage types.

- AM – for Essential Purchase of Medical Benefits
- AN – for Essential Premium Assistance

Adults who are eligible for Essential Purchase of Medical Benefits will receive a MassHealth card. Adults who are eligible for Essential Premium Assistance will not receive a MassHealth card.

Coverage Dates

Persons approved for Essential Purchase of Medical Benefits will not receive benefits until they choose a PCC. If they were enrolled with a PCC when they lost their Basic benefits in April 2003, they will be enrolled with the same provider, if possible. If they need to choose a different PCC or if they were previously enrolled in an MCO, they must choose a new PCC.

Persons who have health insurance and are eligible for Essential Premium Assistance will receive coverage under Essential Premium Assistance beginning in the calendar month following the verification of the member's health insurance information.

**Instructions for
Processing ERV-7s
and MBRs Received
Before 10/1/03**

Follow the procedures below for processing any **orange ERVs** received before the MassHealth Essential implementation date of October 1, 2003, as well as for **new MBRs** for long-term unemployed persons received from September 2, 2003 through October 1, 2003.

MEC Processing

To prevent a processing backlog for October 1, 2003, when an **orange** ERV is received at a MEC before October 1, 2003, MEC staff will process the orange ERV as follows.

- At the MA21 User Option Menu, select New MHBR/ERV.
 - Enter the Received Date in the Received Date field.
 - Enter "ESS," as the Essential identifier in the Referred by field.
 - Update the Receive Application information from the ERV as usual.
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**Instructions for
Processing ERV-7s
and MBRs Received
Before 10/1/03
(cont.)**

```
Press PF5 to confirm Add
MBRPD051          ***** MassHealth *****          MBRMD051
Aug 19,03          - Receive Application -              04:06 PM
                                           Done: _ (Y)
-----
*Form.....: MBR02
*Screener ID.: _____
Interpreter.: _____
Health Plan.: _____
MHBR Id.....: _____ MEC...: 500
*MBR From BEI.: _____
                                           Receive Date: ____
                                           Referred by.: ESS
                                           ESP Payment.: _____
                                           *Assign to...: DMAAV3
-----
Name.....: ORANGE, ERV _____
Addr - Street: _____
City...: _____ *St: MA
Zip...: _____ Mail.: + _____
                                           Homeless....: N
*Lang - Speak.: _____ Write: _____ Phone - Home: ____
                                           Work: ____
Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---PF6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10---PF11---PF12---
      help retrn quit match confm addr                                main
```

- Complete the Household information as usual.
- Take off all administrative closings.
- Release any households in Profile status, if necessary.
- Review the ERV for **Potential Disability Information (PDI)**.
- **If the ERV has PDI**, enter all information from the ERV and **SCHEDULE the DETERMINATION**. (This will allow the disability supplement to be sent to the member and preserve the start date based on a disability.)
- **If the ERV does not have PDI**, enter all information from the ERV and **STOP!! Press PF12 to leave processing in Record Person Events**.
- **DO Not Schedule the Determination**.
- Households coded "ESS" will be automatically determined by MA21 once Essential benefits are in effect on October 1, 2003.

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**Instructions for
Processing ERV-7s
and MBRs Received
Before 10/1/03
(cont.)**

CPU Processing

- Special handling by CPU for:
 - a. MBRs that have been screened and determined to have been received for a member who lost or was denied Basic after March 17, 2003 (**identified by the closing Action Reason 67**); and
 - b. any MBR received between September 1, 2003 and October 1, 2003, for long-term unemployed persons who are not disabled and appear to meet the eligibility criteria for Essential.

Once the MBR has been screened, data entry staff should process the MBR as follows:

- From the User Option Menu, select New MHBR/ERV.
- Enter the Received Date in the Received Date field.
- Enter "ESS," as the Essential identifier in the Referred by field.
- Update the Receive Application information from the new MBR information as usual.

```
Press PF5 to confirm Add
MBRPD051          ***** MassHealth *****          MBRMD051
Aug 19,03          - Receive Application -              04:06 PM
                                                    Done: _ (Y)
-----
*Form.....: MBR02
*Screener ID.: _____
Interpreter..: _____
Health Plan..: _____
MHBR Id.....: _____      MEC...: 500      *Assign to...: DMAAV3__
*MBR From BEI.: _____
-----
Name.....: _____      SSN.....: 210 21 3211
Addr - Street: _____      Own/Rent....: ____
City...: _____      *St: MA
Zip...: ____ ____      Mail.: +      Homeless....: N
*Lang - Speak.: _____      Write: _____      Phone - Home: ____ ____
                                                    Work: ____ ____
Enter-PF1---PF2---PF3---PF4---PF5---PF6---PF7---PF8---PF9---PF10---PF11---PF12---
      help  retrn quit  match confm addr                                main
```

- Continue by updating the Household information as usual.
- Review the MBR for **Potential Disability Information (PDI)**.

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**Instructions for
Processing ERV-7s
and MBRs Received
Before 10/1/03
(cont.)**

- **If the MBR has PDI**, enter all information from the MBR and **SCHEDULE the DETERMINATION**. (This will allow the disability supplement to be sent to the member and preserve the start date a disability.)
- **If the MBR does not have PDI**, enter all information from the MBR and **STOP!! Press PF12 to leave** processing in Record Person Events.
- **DO Not Schedule the Determination.**
- Households coded “ESS” will be automatically determined by MA21 once Essential benefits are in effect on October 1, 2003.

MEC and CPU Processing

- These processes are designed to record all ERVs and MBRs on MA21 as they are received for persons who are likely to be eligible for Essential while preserving potential disability start dates and preventing premature denials of persons who could become eligible on October 1, 2003.
- Priority should be given to ERV-7s before maintenance activities on other cases.
- New applicants and previous applicants who do not have an ERV-7 can use an MBR to apply for Essential benefits.
- ERV-7s received after October 1, 2003, as well as verifications from previously submitted ERV-7s, should continue to be prioritized for processing on a daily basis.
- On and after October 1, 2003, ERV-7s and MBRs must be processed to completion and will no longer require “ESS” designation.

Questions

If you have any questions about this memo, please contact the Policy Hotline.

This is an important message about getting MassHealth

The legislature has passed, and the governor has signed into law, legislation that will allow the Division of Medical Assistance to provide medical benefits to certain unemployed persons through a new program called MassHealth Essential. On October 1, 2003, these benefits will be available to persons:

- whose monthly income (before taxes and deductions) is at or below \$749 (\$1,010, if you are married);
- who are not currently working and have not worked in the past year;
- who are not eligible for unemployment benefits; and
- who meet certain other eligibility criteria.

We think you may meet these rules and may be eligible for MassHealth benefits. You must fill out the enclosed MassHealth Eligibility Review Form so that we can decide if you are eligible. If you have income, you must also send us proof of the amount you get each month. The enclosed information sheet will help you fill out the form and tell you about other information we may need.

Send the filled-out MassHealth Eligibility Review Form along with proof of any income to the MassHealth Enrollment Center listed below in this notice. Once we get the filled-out form, we will send you a notice on or after October 1, 2003, that tells you if you are eligible. If you are eligible you must choose a primary care doctor before you can get benefits. We will send you an enrollment package so that you can choose a primary care doctor.

If you have other health insurance, we may be able to pay for all, or a part of, your health insurance premium.

If you are not eligible for MassHealth, we will send you a notice that tells you why you are not eligible.

Since the legislation only gives us a certain amount of money to spend on this benefit, it is important that you fill out and send back the enclosed MassHealth Eligibility Review Form as soon as you get this notice. The Division will stop enrollment as soon as 36,000 people are enrolled. The MassHealth Essential program is currently funded through September 30, 2004. We will let you know about any future changes in this program.

If you have questions or need help filling out the MassHealth Eligibility Review Form, call the MassHealth Enrollment Center at the telephone number listed below.

MassHealth Enrollment Center
MEC Address
MEC City, State, ZIP
Toll-free 1-888-665-9993
TTY: 1-888-665-9997 for persons with partial or total hearing loss